

P 101446Z NOV 08
FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2873
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMCONSUL DURBAN

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 000224

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [SF](#)

SUBJECT: ANC PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA ADDRESSES PRESS CLUB

¶1. (U) African National Congress (ANC) president Jacob Zuma addressed the Cape Town Press Club at a breakfast meeting on Friday November 7, 2008. Mr. Zuma opened his address by referring to the U.S. elections and reflecting on his recent visit to the United States. He highlighted the importance of continued co-operation between the U.S. and South Africa and congratulated President-Elect Obama on his historic victory. Mr. Zuma hailed Obama's victory as a victory for non-racialism. He said that it was an exciting milestone in the history of Americans and the world, and that it was the beginning of a new era for international relations.

¶2. (U) During the question and answer session Jacob Zuma was asked what the ANC would do to curb possible election violence in the upcoming 2009 elections. He said the country would hold peaceful elections next year and pledged to reign in officials from the party's youth league who have made inflammatory statements. Zuma also said the ANC had noted fears expressed by some opinion makers that the 2009 elections may be fraught with violence, and that South Africans should not encourage such pessimism. He continued by saying the South African democracy has matured since 1994 and there is no reason why a robust contest between political parties should lead to violence. Mr. Zuma was also asked whether he would stop singing the Umshini wam song, as it is seen by many as a call to violence. Note: Jacob Zuma regularly encourages supporters at political rallies to sing a revolutionary song entitled Umshini Wam, which literally means "bring me my machine gun." The song has become synonymous with the ANC President and remains very controversial as many feel that the modern political message should be about reconciliation, peace and development. End note. While Zuma agreed that the ANC must oppose any political violence and teach the young people to live peacefully he failed to give a definitive answer on whether he would continue to sing the song. When asked specifically about Julius Malema, leader of the ANC Youth League, Mr. Zuma said that the issue had been addressed with Malema. Note: Julius Malema has threatened to 'kill' for Zuma and warned that any attempt to prevent Zuma from becoming president could be met with violence. End note. Zuma said that Malema is like any other hot headed young man who will mature with time and added that even Nelson Mandela was hot headed as a young man.

¶3. (U) Responding to a question regarding government corruption, and, in particular the tender process, Mr. Zuma said the final decisions on government tenders must be taken out of the hands of politicians. He suggested creating a tender board to address this issue. Zuma was also asked whether he believed it would be a good for President Motlanthe to remain in office for a five year term for the sake of the country's stability. Zuma said he did not operate as an individual and his views on this matter are shaped by the ANC, and the ANC has the final word on that matter.

4 (U) The issue of Zimbabwe was also raised and the question asked whether Thabo Mbeki should be removed as mediator since many people feel that Mbeki's ties to President Mugabe cloud his judgment. Zuma said that it was up to SADC to deal with Zimbabwe, and also noted that the ANC would not interfere with Mbeki's role as mediator as Mbeki represented the SADC group not South Africa specifically.

¶5. (U) Note: The event was attended by about 150 people, including the CG and Consulate staff. Throughout the event Mr. Zuma appeared at ease and made light of his judicial and political woes. He Qat ease and made light of his judicial and political woes. He remains a powerful politician who profoundly affects South Africa and its future. He responded warmly to often hostile questions and like any good politician he avoided answering difficult questions by

offering pleasantries and a smile. End note.